

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Olivia Rockwell, Brian Larkin, Elizabeth Isbey, Benjamin Willis, and Elizabeth Jurinka, legislative fellows in my office, be given floor privileges for the remainder of this Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that notwithstanding the provisions of rule XXII, the vote on confirmation of Judge Thapar occur at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 25; that if confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CONGRATULATING THE WEBSTER UNIVERSITY CHESS TEAM FOR WINNING A RECORD-BREAKING FIFTH CONSECUTIVE NATIONAL TITLE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 177, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 177) congratulating the Webster University chess team for winning a record-breaking fifth consecutive national title at the President's Cup collegiate chess championship in New York City.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I further ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 177) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY, DOCUMENT PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of S. Res. 178, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 178) to authorize testimony, document production, and representation in *United States v. Kevin Lee Olson*.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to and the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 178) was agreed to.

#### ORDERS FOR THURSDAY, MAY 25, 2017

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 10:30 a.m., Thursday, May 25; further, that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day, and morning business be closed; further, that following leader remarks, the Senate proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the Thapar nomination; finally, that all time during morning business, recess, adjournment, and leader remarks count postclosure on the Thapar nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent that it stand adjourned under the previous order, following the remarks of Senators MANCHIN, SULLIVAN, and MERKLEY.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from West Virginia.

#### HEALTHCARE LEGISLATION

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I rise today to talk about the concerns of the good people of my great State of West Virginia, about their healthcare and the needs they have. If the American Health Care Act is passed, which is the Republican plan that was passed over in the House, many West Virginians are going to lose their current insurance coverage.

Individuals on Medicaid expansion would not be guaranteed coverage after 2020. That means that for anybody that has gotten insurance for the first time, there is no guarantee they can keep it at all past 2020. The American Hospital Association estimates that 68,200 West

Virginians would lose their Medicaid coverage in 2018, and another 126,000 people who currently have it would be without Medicaid coverage by 2026.

The American Health Care Act, which is being sent by our friends in the House—our Republican friends in the House—increases the cost to our State. The bill cuts \$834 billion from Medicaid, meaning that the State would receive less Federal Medicaid funding, and it would not increase if costs rise in the case of health crises.

In fact, the American Hospital Association estimates that my State of West Virginia would lose a total of \$9.8 billion over the next 10 years—\$9.8 billion over the next 10 years alone in my great State. With all of the hard work they have done, to go without healthcare is unbelievable.

This bill would also increase costs for older, sicker, poorer, rural West Virginians. We have this type of a population in all of our States. Older Americans would face higher costs because insurance companies could charge them five times more than younger beneficiaries—five times more. So if a young beneficiary is paying \$2,500 a year, they can end up paying \$10,000, \$12,000 a year. That would increase the costs to older Americans nationally by anywhere from \$2,000 to \$8,400.

We did this little comparison here of what that would actually look like. Let's say there is a low-income senior, somebody who hasn't gotten to Medicare eligibility yet because of their age, and they are over the 138th percentile of the poverty guidelines, and they are paying about \$1,700 now for their insurance under the Affordable Care Act.

With this piece of legislation, they are going to pay upwards of \$13,000—\$13,000, which they don't have. The cost to purchase insurance for low-income seniors in West Virginia who buy insurance on the exchanges, as I just showed you, could go up to almost 800 percent—800 percent of the costs they are paying.

So today I am going to share the story of a West Virginian who is concerned about losing her healthcare. This West Virginia native is Stephanie Fredricksen. She told me her story at a townhall that we had in the Eastern Panhandle in March. She asked me to make sure I shared this story with all of you. This will be printed in the RECORD. So this is going to be Stephanie's story. This is one of many stories throughout my State of West Virginia:

My name is Stephanie Fredricksen and back in April 2016, I woke up one day unable to turn my head due to stiffness in my neck and terrible pain. At first I thought I had just slept on it wrong and it would go away. By early May, the pain had spread to every joint in my body.

Then, I began to experience painful spasms in my back, my shoulders, my neck, and even my jaw. I started having blurred vision and shooting pain in my eyes. I also began suffering from extreme exhaustion, on really bad days activities as simple as getting out

of bed, getting dressed, and brushing my hair can tire me out for hours. I could go on and on with a long list of other horrible symptoms.

My illness began to affect my job as a Property & Casualty Insurance Agent. I started missing more and more time from work, first due to doctor appointments and then due to the worsening of my symptoms. Eventually, I was forced to file a claim for long-term disability insurance. I had been undergoing multiple tests and examinations and I thought the physicians would soon determine what was wrong and prescribe the appropriate treatment so I could get back my life and get back to work.

That never happened. During this time I had physical therapy and after a couple of weeks of treatment I was able to move my neck again. But by August, I was diagnosed with Systemic Lupus, Systemic Sclerosis, Osteoarthritis and Severe Spinal Stenosis among other related conditions. Although my employer assured me they had my back, in October, I received a certified letter from an attorney advising me that my employment had been terminated.

As a result, I lost my healthcare coverage and was offered COBRA coverage for a period of only three months.

On February 1, 2017, I became one of millions who rely on the Affordable Care Act (ACA). I was already familiar with the ACA because my husband had been covered by it since 2012.

My husband works for a small business that doesn't offer health insurance. The ACA was about \$350 less than for him to be added to my former employers's plan. Some of you may be thinking after hearing about some of my conditions that they aren't life ending but you would be wrong.

I suffer from autoimmune diseases. My immune system attacks my own body instead of resisting hostile foreign invaders. So my immune system will not fight off but will actually help the bad things to spread and become even stronger.

In approximately 50 percent of people with Systemic Lupus a major organ or tissue in the body such as the heart, lungs, kidneys or brain will become affected.

Between 10 and 15 percent of Lupus patients will die prematurely. However, it is widely believed that number is substantially underreported. Many deaths are reported as a result of the complications such as kidney failure and not the Lupus itself.

1 in 3 patients with Lupus also have another autoimmune disease. I fall into that category having been diagnosed with Systemic Sclerosis as well. Systemic Sclerosis can also involve the heart, kidneys, lungs, liver and brain. Internal organ complications are common and are often not symptomatic until the late stages of disease, thus routine screening is essential. Lung involvement is the leading cause of death.

She shared her story and much more with me at a townhall in Martinsburg. She asked me to read this on the Senate floor. She asked me to share her story because she has tried to share it with all of the elected officials herself, not just for herself but also for the protected 24 million Americans who are at risk of losing their insurance if the Affordable Care Act is repealed and replaced with the American Health Care Act, the act that was just passed in the House which is being sent to the Senate.

So she is asking us: Please, do not pass this. Do not repeal the ACA but fix it. We all know it needs to be re-

paired. The private market needs to be fixed, not to mention those who will no longer be able to afford it with the premiums going up, especially for the older, poorer senior citizens.

I obviously have pre-existing conditions, no job, and my husband's job does not offer health insurance. In other words, without the ACA, I would not be able to get the insurance I need so badly. I also fear that based on numbers provided by the CBO, if insurance is still available to me, I won't be able to afford it and of course there is also my husband's insurance to worry about.

At the same time many young and healthy people chose to take a gamble believing like we all do when we're young that nothing bad is ever going to happen to us.

As a result, the ACA risk pool was not as diverse as it should have been. Robust participation is so critical to ensuring citizens have access to and a real choice in affordable coverage. Imagine if those that oppose the ACA actually got behind it for the good of the country.

The ACA even with all of its opposition helped millions and it appears that the American people realize this, even many that were originally fooled by the negative rhetoric have decided they want to keep it. Please do what is right for us the citizens that have chosen each of you to represent us.

As I pointed out earlier, many of those people have come around to a different way of thinking as of late and I wouldn't be so sure that they will be there for you the next time when they vote if you have taken away their health care or their parents, siblings, children, grandparents, aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, neighbors, friends, church members, coworkers, classmates, and so on. Of course we can't forget that a lot of those people will die as a result of not being able to keep their health care as well.

Putting your politics, egos, agendas, and parties aside in this case will actually save human lives. I ask you all not to repeal and replace the ACA and instead to work together to fix it and make improvements.

Please don't allow the CEOs of insurance companies and the wealthiest Americans to make even more money at the expense of those Americans who are the most vulnerable, like the disabled, the sick, the elderly and those with lower incomes.

I beg of you, PLEASE oppose the repeal of the ACA and please oppose any plan that could leave me and millions like me without health insurance or that will increase our premiums or deductibles or reduce or eliminate any current coverage. Our lives are depending on it and we are depending on you.

So, as I have promised, I have read this letter, Stephanie's story. I am hoping that Stephanie is listening and watching, but also for all the people that she represents—people who have serious illnesses, who are going to be left out or who are afraid they are going to be left out, elderly people who are going to not be able to afford insurance.

There are a lot of things that we can do, but one thing that we can all be doing is working together as Republicans and Democrats and putting our country first and people in our States and fixing this. We know it needs to be fixed. Get off the political rhetoric and quit blaming each other and sit down and say: OK, this needs to be repaired. This private market doesn't work the way it was intended to.

We need to get more young people involved. We need the market forces to

work. We need for everyone who has insurance for the first time to use it in the most efficient, effective, and appropriate way. There is a lot that can be done, but not just by taking political votes and holding each other in harm's way.

I thank you for allowing me to tell Stephanie's story. I hope it helps. I can't wait to sit down and start working with all of our colleagues in this body.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### AUTHORIZING TESTIMONY, DOCUMENT PRODUCTION, AND REPRESENTATION

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the preamble to S. Res. 178 be agreed to.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, previously agreed to, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### SECURING OUR AGRICULTURE AND FOOD ACT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1238 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 1238) to amend the Homeland Security Act of 2002 to make the Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Health Affairs responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security related to food, agriculture, and veterinary defense against terrorism, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. SULLIVAN. I ask unanimous consent that the Roberts amendment at the desk be considered and agreed to, the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 217) was agreed to, as follows:

(Purpose: To preserve the authority of the Secretaries of Agriculture and Health and Human Services and make a technical correction)

On page 4, lines 1 and 2, strike "relating to food and agriculture" and insert "or the Secretary of Health and Human Services".